

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 10814

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, ELTN, UR

SUBJECT: TRANSPORT OF SOVIET PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

REF: (A) MOSCOW 10476, (B) MOSCOW 10378, (C) MOSCOW 10278

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. SUMMARY: THE JULY 26 PRAVDA
CITES INSUFFICIENT RAIL TRANSPORT CAPACITY FOR KEEPING
OMSK OIL REFINERY OUTPUT BELOW PLAN. INADEQUATE CLEANING
OF TANK CARS BETWEEN HAULS OF DIFFERING PRODUCTS RECEIVES
THE PRINCIPAL SHARE OF THE BLAME. PRAVDA ALSO COMPLAINS
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ABOUT THE LAG IN CONSTRUCTION OF OIL PRODUCT PIPELINES
SERVING THE OMSK REFINERY. THE ARTICLE ADDS ANOTHER
INSTANCE TO RECENT SOVIET PRESS COMPLAINTS ABOUT CON-
STRUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION SNAGS IN WEST SIBERIAN OIL
AND GAS PRODUCTION. END SUMMARY.

1. A JULY 26 PRAVDA ARTICLE BLAMES THE POOR PERFORMANCE

OF THE OMSK OIL REFINING COMPLEX ON INADEQUATE RAIL TRANSPORT CAPACITY. TANK CARS ARE NOT BEING CLEANED FAST ENOUGH AFTER EACH HAUL TO ENABLE THEM TO HANDLE THE GROWING VARIETY OF PRODUCTS PRODUCED. SINCE JANUARY 1977, SAID PRAVDA, THE OMSK COMPLEX HAS BEEN UNABLE TO ACCEPT "HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF TONS" OF TYUMEN CRUDE NEEDED TO FULFILL PLAN, AND CUSTOMERS IN TURN HAVE NOT RECEIVED SCHEDULED DELIVERIES.

2. ALTHOUGH THE RAIL SYSTEM SERVING THE OMSK REFINERY HAS BEEN REVAMPED, THE MAJOR FACILITY FOR CLEANING TANK CARS IS NOT WORKING AT FULL CAPACITY; IT HANDLES ONLY A THIRD OF THE CARS THAT THE REFINERY REQUIRES. MOREOVER, A "SIGNIFICANT NUMBER" OF CARS RETURN TO OMSK WITH LARGE AMOUNTS OF THE PREVIOUS PRODUCT STILL INSIDE, WHICH COMPLICATES LOADING A DIFFERENT PRODUCT.

3. ONE REMEDY, PRAVDA SAID, IS TO ALLOCATE CERTAIN TANK CARS TO SPECIFIC CUSTOMERS, MINIMIZING THE NUMBER OF PRODUCTS CARRIED AND THUS REDUCING THE CLEANING REQUIRED. SUCH A METHOD HAS BEEN TRIED SUCCESSFULLY IN SUPPLYING FUELS TO CIVIL AVIATION AIRFIELDS. CLOSER COORDINATION OF PLANNING BETWEEN REFINING AND RAILWAY ASSOCIATIONS IS ALSO MUCH NEEDED, PRAVDA REPORTED. TIME-CONSUMING CROSS-HAULING OF OIL PRODUCTS MUST BE REDUCED THROUGH MUCH EFFICIENT ROUTINGS.

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4. PRAVDA ALSO NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT MANY OF THESE PROBLEMS WOULD NOT BE AS SEVERE IF CRUDE AND PRODUCT PIPELINES WERE BEING COMPLETED MORE RAPIDLY. THE PAST 10 YEARS HAVE WITNESSED A SLOW PACE OF TRUNKLINE CONSTRUCTION IN BOTH SIBERIA AND KAZAKHSTAN. BUREAUCRATIC SNAGS HAD KEPT THE OMSK-PETROPAVLOVSK LINE FROM BEGINNING SIGNIFICANT OPERATION UNTIL RECENTLY. MUCH MORE ATTENTION FROM NATIONAL-LEVEL MINISTRIES IS NEEDED, SAID PRAVDA, TO RESOLVE THE LOWER-LEVEL ADMINISTRATION PROBLEMS HAMPERING BOTH RAIL AND PIPELINE TRANSPORT OF OIL FROM THE OMSK REFINERY.

END UNCLASSIFIED

5. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: THE PRAVDA ARTICLE DESCRIBES PROBLEMS SIMILAR TO THOSE FACING TRANSPORT OF REFINED GAS PRODUCTS IN WESTERN SIBERIA (REF B). IT ALSO STRIKES A MORE PESSIMISTIC NOTE ABOUT PIPELINES SUBSTANTIALLY EASING THE BURDEN ON THE RAILWAYS DURING THE CURRENT FIVE-YEAR PLAN THAN THAT REPORTED IN REF A. COMING SOON AFTER THE REPORTED VISIT TO THE SURGUT REGION BY THE HEADS OF THE MINISTRIES OF OIL, GAS, AND CONSTRUCTION

OF OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISES (RETN THE PRAVDA REPORT
SEEMS TO UNDERLINE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM OF
INTER-MINISTRY COORDINATION IN TYUMEN OIL AND GAS
PRODUCTION.
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Message Attributes

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